

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
Arts Commission



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March 12, 2009

TO: Brian Bosse, City Redevelopment Agency, Manager
FROM: Ginny Brush, County Arts Commission, Executive Director
RE: Proposal for State Street Storefront Temporary Exhibition Pilot Program

Background:

In response to concern over the impact of increasing numbers of empty storefronts along State Street in the Historic Cultural Arts District, meetings were held with members of City Council, the Downtown Organization, and the City Redevelopment Agency to address the issue.

At a March 3rd meeting City RDA staff presented a current block-by-block inventory of empty storefronts along with models of temporary storefront exhibitions from other cities (Santa Cruz and Long Beach). Some management companies and property owners of vacancies were also identified.

Arts Commission staff presented a model and identified a variety of organizations and institutions (see following list) that have expressed interest and enthusiasm for the concept of temporary storefront exhibitions based on the 1989/90 Frontage Gallery model. [During the construction of Paseo Nuevo empty storefronts were used as temporary art exhibition spaces that were organized, and selected by a curatorial team linked to Arts Commission].

Potential organizations, groups and institutions interested in the concept are:

- Santa Barbara City Poet Laureate and the poetry community
- Art Studio Department UCSB
 - Graduate and Undergraduate students exhibitions
 - Projects linked to public art classes [Callister/Yasuda/Mulfinger/Beckman]
- University Art Museum (Satellite exhibitions linked to UCSB exhibits)
 - Katherine Kanjo, Director
 - Elyse Gonzales, Curator
- Contemporary Arts Forum Visiting Artists/Model like their Bloom Project
 - Miki Garcia, Director
- SBMA Education/Outreach "Teens for Teens" Program
 - Patsy Hicks, Director
- Santa Barbara Visual Arts Alliance (SBVA)
- Art From Scrap
- Rumble Art Group
 - Catherine Gee Contacts to interested artists

The concept of a pilot program of temporary storefront exhibitions was presented to the Downtown Organization's Cultural Committee and was enthusiastically supported and was well received by the Board of Directors at its March meeting.

Recommendations:

RDA provide funding to support a pilot program of temporary art exhibitions in vacant storefronts in the Historic Cultural Arts and Old Town Districts from May through October 2009 and have program in place for summer tourist season, Solstice Parade, and Old Spanish Days.

Purpose:

In the Redevelopment Project Area, stem blight conditions encouraged by vacant store fronts through the display of temporary public art.

Benefits:

- Attractively feature and call attention to “for lease” store fronts
- Draw additional foot traffic to downtown
- Synergistically enhance *1st Thursday* programming already in place
- Identify and brand the historic cultural arts district
- Provide increased exhibition opportunities for area artists
- Link otherwise unaffiliated groups and cultural institutions to the Downtown

Scope:

The pilot program would consist of low-capital art installations being placed temporarily in vacant store front windows along downtown State Street. It has been suggested that original poetry formatted on poster-sized displays be placed in the Cultural Arts District above De la Guerra Street and similarly formatted historical photographs of the downtown be placed in the Old Town area of lower State Street. The specific form and content of the program will be determined jointly by the Arts Commission and Downtown Organization and is still to be determined.

The length of any single display would be approximately 3 months, but this period may vary according to storefront availability. Local artists and work would be identified for display through a curatorial process and reviewed by City Arts Advisory and the Downtown Organization’s Cultural Committee for approval. Artists would assume all liability for the displayed work (or would be insured through the Arts Commission). No utility use (such as lighting) would be required of the installation space.

The program would seek to build upon and enhance the existing cultural events scheduled in the area. Kick off for the program is set for May 7th as part of *1st Thursday*, following up on April as National Poetry Month celebration and the recent installation of the City’s new Poet Laureate.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Arts Commission would administer the program and oversee the project in partnership with the Downtown Organization and City RDA.

The Arts Commission would provide staff for installation and deinstallation of exhibitions and oversee curatorial selection and review process with City Arts Advisory and the Downtown Organization's Cultural Committee.

The Arts Commission and Downtown Organization would agree upon general form and format of the installations, and create a name/brand for the project linked to Downtown Cultural Arts District.

The Downtown Organization would maintain a dynamic inventory of potential installation spaces and, with the support of the Arts Commission, would work to secure agreements with property managers, leaseholders, and owners.

Participation in the program would be voluntary and signed lease opportunities would take priority over installation terms. Management groups and owners would be credited for their participation in the program.

Proposed Schedule:

March 17:	Review Program Proposal by planning group Agree upon form and format of work
Week of 4/6:	Identify insurance requirements (waivers, etc) Draft name/brand for program (Arts Commission & DO) Gallery Agreement and Artist Waiver drafted (Arts Commission)
Week of 4/13:	RDA Purchase Order finalized (RDA) Gallery Agreement and Artist Waiver finalized (Arts Commission & DO) Appoint Curator (Arts Commission)
April 16:	Present Program Proposal to Arts Advisory Committee for approval (Arts Commission)
Week of 4/20:	Select works (Arts Commission) Secure store fronts and agreements signed (DO) Get waivers signed (Arts Commission)
May 4:	Works are formatted and ready for installation
May 7:	Roll out new exhibitions in conjunction with 1 st Thursday programming and promotion.
July:	Second exhibition selection and promotion
July 31:	First exhibition ends
Aug 6:	Second exhibition kick-off at 1 st Thursday
Aug – Oct:	Run second exhibition
Oct 31:	Pilot program ends

Estimated Pilot Program budget:

Proposed number of installations: 12	
Promotional materials including production/ development	\$ 2,000
Administration/Curatorial fees/RFP process	\$ 4,000
Installation/Deinstallation:	\$ 6,000
Labor and install materials	
Artist Honoraria (cover cost for materials)	\$ 6,000
TOTAL:	\$18,000



Executive Director
Santa Barbara County Arts Commission